



Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood

Trevor Noah

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The compelling, inspiring, and comically sublime story of one man's coming-of-age, set during the twilight of apartheid and the tumultuous days of freedom that followed

Trevor Noah's unlikely path from apartheid South Africa to the desk of *The Daily Show* began with a criminal act: his birth. Trevor was born to a white Swiss father and a black Xhosa mother at a time when such a union was punishable by five years in prison. Living proof of his parents' indiscretion, Trevor was kept mostly indoors for the earliest years of his life, bound by the extreme and often absurd measures his mother took to hide him from a government that could, at any moment, steal him away. Finally liberated by the end of South Africa's tyrannical white rule, Trevor and his mother set forth on a grand adventure, living openly and freely and embracing the opportunities won by a centuries-long struggle.

Born a Crime is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man's relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.

The stories collected here are by turns hilarious, dramatic, and deeply affecting. Whether subsisting on caterpillars for dinner during hard times, being thrown from a moving car during an attempted kidnapping, or just trying to survive the life-and-death pitfalls of dating in high school, Trevor illuminates his curious world with an incisive wit and unflinching honesty. His stories weave together to form a moving and searingly funny portrait of a boy making his way through a damaged world in a dangerous time, armed only with a keen sense of humor and a mother's unconventional, unconditional love.

Advance praise for *Born a Crime*

"[A] substantial collection of staggering personal essays . . . Incisive, funny, and vivid, these true tales are anchored to his portrait of his courageous, rebellious, and religious mother who defied racially restrictive laws to secure an education and a career for herself—and to have a child with a white Swiss/German even though sex between whites and blacks was illegal. . . . [Trevor Noah's] electrifying memoir sparkles with funny stories . . . and his candid and compassionate essays deepen our perception of the complexities of race, gender, and class."—*Booklist* (starred review)

"A gritty memoir . . . studded with insight and provocative social criticism . . . with flashes of brilliant storytelling and acute observations."—*Kirkus Reviews*

From the Hardcover edition.

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